

Listing of Claims:

1.-33. (Canceled)

34. (Previously Presented) A method for quantitating viable cells in a sample, comprising providing a sample containing said cells, contacting said cells with molecule or dye that is detectably altered by enzymatic activity of a viable cell, detecting a total amount of enzymatically altered molecule or dye, and correlating said total amount with a standard value, thereby quantitating viable cells in said sample.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein said cells are bacteria.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein said cells are yeast.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the enzymatic activity is esterase activity.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein said enzymatically altered dye or molecule comprises fluorescein diacetate or OREGON GREEN™.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein detection is performed by a fluorometer.

40. (Previously Presented) A kit for quantifying viable yeast or bacteria, comprising a cell suspension solution, a cell penetrating dye, wherein said dye is enzymatically and detectably altered following penetration of viable cells, and instructions for detecting enzymatically altered dye.